DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 364 276 JC 930 543

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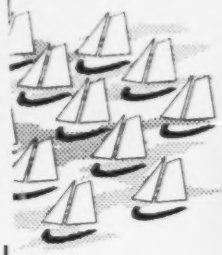
TITLE Flotilla-Sailing Is the Name of the Game.
PUB DATE Nov 93
NOTE 16p.; Paper presented at "Reinventing the Community College," the Annual Computer Conference of the League for Innovation in the Community College (10th, Nashville, TN, November 14-17, 1993).
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Administrative Change; *Administrative Organization; Administrator Characteristics; Adult Education; Apprenticeships; *Change Strategies; College Planning; Community Colleges; Decentralization; Educational Change; *Educational Legislation; *Educational Policy; Foreign Countries; Institutional Characteristics; Labor Force Development; Two Year Colleges; *Vocational Education
IDENTIFIERS Friesland College (Netherlands); *Netherlands

ABSTRACT

Friesland College (FC) in the province of Friesland, the Netherlands, provides students with an array of vocational education, including full-time senior secondary vocational education in 3- or 4-year programs; 2-year programs of full-time short courses; and an apprenticeship system, in which students learn a trade at a company while attending the college part-time. The college also offers basic adult education, training for unemployed workers, and in-company training. FC is located in an agricultural province of roughly 600,000 people with the highest unemployment rate in the Netherlands. Other factors affecting the college are decreasing numbers of young people, a shortage of 60,000 people per year nationwide in clerical and technical fields, and a 30-40% college dropout rate. To address these issues and in preparation for new legislation on education and vocational training effective in 1996, the province has undertaken the "Veranderplan," or Change Program. The program is designed to transform FC from one large institution to a group, or "flotilla," of 17 smaller units in in following seven stages: (1) five separate vocational colleges and one apprenticeship college existing at the "point of departure" (1989-90); (2) merger into one college, FC (1990-91); (3) tentative, informal merger between FC, one college for general adult education, eight centers for basic education, and an institute for socio-cultural education (1991-92); (4) formal merger, creating a Regional Education Centre (1992-93); (5) internal merger, establishing 17 individual academic units (1993-94); (6) first evaluation and introduction of total quality management (1994-96); and (7) final evaluation of process and results in time to meet the legislative requirement (January 1, 1996). (PAA)

ED 364 276



flotilla-sailing is the name of the game

de Ruyter, flotilla-sailing

friesland college, the netherlands 1

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flotilla-sailing is the name of the game [1]

Ladies and gentlemen,

Exactly 326 years ago today, on the nineteenth of July 1667, Great Britain was successfully invaded for the last time in its history. Though the invaders only stayed for a couple of days, the people of London fled in a panic, the royal fleet was destroyed and the english flagship, the Royal Charles, was captured and brought over to Amsterdam, where in the State Museum its escutcheon still can be seen. The man who pulled off this difficult feat that was never to be repeated, was a Dutch admiral, and his name was Michiel de Ruyter. The year before this gallant deed, admiral De Ruyter had gained a splendid victory over the English fleet in what would go down in history as the Fourdays' Seabattle. He used a new technique that he had adopted and perfected: flotilla-sailing.

Today this technique, this approach, is again very alive in the Netherlands, and hopefully just as succesful in gaining objectives as it was 326 years ago, though less destructive. We are talking about flotilla-sailing in the sea of vocational training and adult education. And the fleet we are talking about is Friesland College, community college for the Dutch county or province of Friesland. And are we talking here about war? Of course it is too strong an expression, but in some respects: yes; competition, strength, flexibility, impact, quality. The Dutch educational system is changing and if the College doesn't want to die slowly in this world, it has to change too and fight for it.

topics of this hour [2]

So first we want to give you some insight in the Dutch sea of education, and of course especially the place of further education in this educational system, and more especially how Friesland College fits into that, and into its community of Friesland. In line with the external developments that have been taking place rapidly in the last three years, our college has to find its form and shape in this changing educational world, after a definition of what it is, what it wants to be and what its objectives are. Therefore FC works according to a plan, a scheme, for the oncoming years. This plan is called the "Veranderplan", for those who cannot understand Dutch: The Change Program, built in seven stages, made to gain the educational and organizational objectives and goals, to change from supertanker in flotilla, that is, a lot of more specialized ships. And the name of this game is: Flotilla sailing.

diagram of Dutch education and training [3]

In this diagram we present shortly the dutch educational system. After a child has finished his or her primary education, he or she can choose different routes. Untill now those different routes were also placed in different types of schools, but under new legislation, the Basic Education Act, this will change at August 1. Then all schools for secondary education which link up with elementary or primary education start with basic education. Pupils will be taught in the same subjects during the first three years. It is rightly so that schools will resemble each other more, but differences remain, as in level of difficulty, in tempo, in approach, in options and in atmosphere. After two and three years a pupil will go into a qualifiing route. That can be pre-university education (until 17 or 18 years old): the old gymnasium, atheneum and grammar school, or higher (or senior) general secondary education (until 16 or 17 years old), or lower (or junior) general secondary education, or pre-vocational education. Of course there are also routes for special education (4-18).

The first two groups will mainly go into scientific education or higher vocation education, at universities and polytechnical colleges, although rather a lot of students from the higher general secondary education also go to colleges like ours. But our students mainly come from the lower general secondary and pre-vocational schools, as well from all sorts of adult education. And the different routes our type of college provides are the senior secondary vocational education, that is fulltime in 3 or 4 years, and the full time short courses of 2 years; the apprenticeship or day-release system, in which the student will learn a trade at a company concerned within two and three years, at different levels, and for one or two days a week the student will go to college. There is a day-release system for practically every sector of industry and commerce, so there is a broad choice. Furthermore there are special routes in the socio-cultural education. And there is a broad section of adult education: basic adult education, general secondary education, parttime day and evening courses; a job whilst studying parttime; working and training in day-release system; training for unemployed workers and training measures of the employment services, for example learning a vocation without following a training course, and vocational training with a likelihood of getting a job. Finally there is in-company training and training per branch of industry and commerce, training of entrepeneurs and contract-activities. And when we talk about a community college for vocational training and adult education, we talk about a college that covers this entire area.

Friesland: the Community [4]

Lets have a quick look first at Friesland as a county, as a community, with a special relationship to the United States, for in 1782 the States of Friesland were the first in the world to acknowledge the independence of the United States of America. On the map of the world, even on the map of Europe, it is a tiny little square, in reality nearly four 1600 square miles of space and variation. Bounded by sea, rivers, pastures and nature reserves, it is a mixture of rural towns, industrial centres and scattered woods. About 600.000 people live in this province, half of them also speaking the Frisian language, the second official language of the Netherlands, next to Dutch. In addition to the people there are an even greater number of Frisian cows and sheep and innumerable resident and migratory birds. Friesland is traditionally an agricultural county, though the agrarian part of the total employment is constantly decreasing; it is nowadays 25%, inclusive of the supplying and processing industries. Together with the county of Groningen, northen Germany and Denmark, Friesland belongs to the "green belt" which provides food for Europe. Of these regions Friesland is one of the most accessible and internationally orientated; for example, from Friesland to Amsterdam takes one hour by car over roads without tailbacks. Other economical pillars of Friesland are banking and insurance, building and shipbuilding, growing electrical engineering firms and chemical industry and, of course, tourism, especially aquatics. Over 90% of the working people are employed in small and medium-sized businesses, versus concerns like Philips. The capital city is Leeuwarden with its 85,000 inhabitants; next are the towns of Drachten, Sneek and Heerenveen with populations of 30,000 to 50,000, enough for a good level of facilities and services, but too few to create big-town problems. Hardly any Frisian need travel more than 10 kilometers for good sports facilities, school, cultural centre, or shops. A considerable number of small places have become pleasant villages to live in, where the community centre, the church and sometimes the school are reminders of more populous times. In dozens of villages with populations between 750 and 2000 things are kept moving also thanks to an active policy of municipalities and province. But one of the main problems Friesland faces nowadays is unemployment, the highest unemployment-rates of the Netherlands, and connected with it: depopulation and economical recession. In this pleasant, but compared to Holland, economically weak community is situated Friesland College.

Friesland: the College [5 and 6]

The main buildings of the College are situated in the capital town of Leeuwarden, but more than half of the number of buildings are spread throughout Friesland.

number of students:

senior or higher secondary vocational education

4,300

apprenticeship or day-release system and parttime courses

4,300

non-formal education, youth training programmes and socio-cultural education

500

daytime/evening general adult education, on parttime basis

2,500

basic adult education, among other things ESL (NT2)

2,500

number of staff:

total:	850 (610 FTE)
faculty or teaching staff:	630 (440)
administration, secretarial and management:	220 (170)

And I can give you also some figures about the amount of men and women working in the college:

men:	490 (395)
women:	360 (215)

The number of courses is more than 200, and is still growing.

The budget for the regular educational organization of Friesland College is nearly $40 million, of which approximately 80% is for personnel. The new corporation of contractactivities has reached a turnover of two million dollars in three years time.

The status of the college is that it is the first Dutch complete and prominent community college or ROC. It is the biggest college in the north of the Netherlands. The college is a member of the

Consortium voor Innovatie, the consortium of innovation, the Dutch League for Innovation, and a member of several other organizations, among others the British National Association of Managers of Student Services.

There are other colleges for further and higher education in our province of Friesland. There are 3 polytechnics, a general one which is as big as our college, and two smaller ones, of which one is specialized in agricultural studies. There are also 5 smaller colleges for senior secondary vocational education, in some respects our colleagues, of which one is also specialized in agricultural studies.

external developments [7]

Developments in the Dutch and Frisian society and community, more especially in the labourmarket, are most important for the choices Friesland College has to make, and the organization the College wants to adopt, in order to react in an efficient and effective way. A few of those developments are the following.

demand for qualified workforce

For the future of our county an adequately qualified workforce is necessary, but without appropiate measures it will be /questionable if even a community college can realize this standard. At this moment employees with a secondary level account for 40% of the labour-market, and this number is growing. We have to educate young people to an adequate level, but there is also a demand for permanent refresher courses and extra training for employees, due to new technological and environmental developments, among others things.

shortages on the labourmarket

Strangely enough, looking at the unemployment-figures, there is a shortage on the Frisian and Dutch labourmarket on the secondary level, especially in clerical and technical fields. In the Netherlands there is a shortage in this field of 60.000 people per year. However, the number of young people is decreasing, and too many youngsters stay in general education too long instead of doing vocational training. Therefore we have to train targetgroups that don't participate or participate less in the labourmarket. Groups such as girls, women returners, allochtonous people etc.

responsibility for minorities, vulnerable and disadvantaged groups

For those groups we have a special responsibility. We also consider it our task to upgrade the

participation in employment for groups in the community that aren't able by themselves to get a vocational qualification on a primary or secondary level, groups like young and teenage drop-outs, mentally handicapped, and other problematic and risk groups. We have to create special training routes for those groups, in combination with vocational and socio-cultural training.

high drop-out rates

The percentage of students who don't finish their course is too high; between 30 and 40% leave the college with no qualification at all. We have to work at improving the output-numbers. That can be done by aiming at tailor-made education and training instead of, or besides, traditional class teaching, extra teaching, remedial teaching. Therefor traditional boundaries have to be reconsidered between fulltime and parttime education, apprenticeship training and day-release system, etc.

obscure educational supply

In our kind of education there is a very dispersed supply with little programed coherence, which causes obscurity for students and for business, while access is being hindered. For example: a lot of students who are doing basic educational courses and after that want to follow vocational training of some kind, aren't able to do so because the connection between basic education and some kind of vocational training is too loose.

decentralisation, regionalization and deregulation

The national government used to have a great influence on the way colleges had to do their jobs, but this is rapidly changing. More influence is given on the one hand to national consultative bodies of industry and education, on the other hand to local and county authorities. Also the regional Employment Exchange is going to play an important part in this new system.

forming community colleges

Al these developments and new challenges are asking for a new and modern approach. All different educational routes in one specific region should be brought into connexion with each other. Educational supply has to be renewed. We have to focus on new targetgroups. Quality of education must be improved and the drop-out rates must be diminished.

When the Dutch minister of education and science visited our College in 1990, he asked us what we thought about the idea of forming community colleges. When he visited the College for a second time, that was last year, we could tell him that our answer was a positive one. And he held

out the prospect of a new legislation for that purpose to us, a new legislation on education and vocational training, which will be operational on January 1, 1996.

new legislation on education and vocational training 1996

This new legislation will replace all the different legislations and acts that nowadays exist for our types of education. Today, we have to work with legislation on adult education, a different one for apprenticeship education, another for secondary vocational education, the next one for general adult education, for contractactivities and so on and so forth. This all will be placed under one new act in 1996.

The conclusion was and still is, that if Friesland College wants to be the community college for the county of Friesland and the leading institute in the North of the Netherlands, the College had work according to a Program, an enabling structure for the next years to meet the challence and to overcome the difficulties. A program based on developments concerning content, both internally and externally.

the enabling structure [8]

From those developments and an analysis of our position within the region, we destilled our objectives. The phrasing of those objectives led us to the first Mission Statement, based on three principles: quality, accessibility and tailor-made. Unfortunately, time is too short to go deeper into that. This mission statement is the beginning of a definite strategic policy of the new created community college. This is important, of course, but next to this statement and policy we had to create an enabling structure as a mean to achieve the objectives. Therefore we worked out a program, while implementing it at the same time, in a working way, at the same time in strictly strategic planning and in an opportunistic and ad hoc approach. We've called that program: het Veranderplan, the Change Program. Primary the forming of a community college is an educational challenge, not a question of becoming a larger institute. But to create a new system, and to gain our objectives, to create an enabling structure for better product-market-relationships and quality investment, cooperation and sometimes merging with other institutes is a necessity. To rearrange educational routes, to connect them, to specify and to renew them, we have to go into a process first of merger, then of down-sizing, or, as we have called it, scaling up and schooling down, to create new loosely coupled units and supporting services. This process is our Change Program. It is continuously discussed throughout the organization, controlled and counselled by every-one, because every member of the personnel plays her or his role in it. We can distinguish seven stages.

the Change Program: seven stages, a review [9]

I'll give you a review first:

point of departure

1 1989-1990 6 separate colleges: 5 for senior secondary vocational education, 1 for apprenticeship training or day-release system.

"scaling-up": mergers

2. 1990-1991 first merger into one college, the Friesland College, for senior secondary general and vocational education, apprenticeship training, socio-cultural education and coontract-activities.

3. 1991-1992 pre-second merger: Friesland College, one College for General Adult Education, 8 centres for Basic Education, Institute for socio-cultural education.

4. 1992-1993 formal merger, working towards a Regionaal Opleidingencentrum (Regional Education Centre) or community college.

"schooling-down": reshaping and down-sizing

5. 1993-1994 institutional merger, re-shaping education and organization, starting unit-organization

6. 1994-1996 realizing conditions and first evaluation

end of the beginning

7. 1996 finalizing implementation; new legislation

Let us have a closer look at these seven stages of the Change Program.

the Change Program: Seven Stages, the first four [10]

point of departure

1 1989-1990 6 separate colleges: 5 for senior secondary vocational education, 1 for apprenticeship training or day-release system. Pre-merger-year: working on institutionalization of cooperation. Formulating objectives: to create synergy and surplus value. Starting to work out a system of budget-discipline, called EBS (Economic Control System).

"scaling-up": mergers

2. 1990-1991 first merger into one college, the Friesland College, for senior secondary general and vocational education, apprenticeship training, socio-cultural education and contract-activities, under new legislation on Reorganization and Renewal of Vocational Education (socalled SVM-legislation); college divided into four divisions (of technology, of economical and clerical studies, of social studies and health

care, of apprenticeship training), together with general education, socio-cultural education, orientation and bridging courses. A managementteam has been created, with linking-pin into four divisions, and three service-offices (personnel, resources, education); there has been an intensive process of building-up of this team. Strategic objectives and goals have been formulated in the first Integral Policy Scheme and an Innovation Scheme. New business vertures have been taken up: aims have been formulated for contractactivities.

3. 1991-1992 pre-second merger: Friesland College, one College for General Adult Education, 8 centres for Basic Education, Institute for socio-cultural education. Based on new external (economic) developments and employment policy FC has formulated broader objectives in relationship with adult education. A mission has been formulated and from the Integral Policy Scheme the first version of the Change Program has been derived.

the Change Program: Seven Stages, the last three [11]

4. 1992-1993 formal merger, working towards a Regionaal Opleidingencentrum (Regional Education Centre) or community college. The Change Program gets its definite form, the second Integral Policy Scheme has been written, for the whole field of secondary vocational training and adult education. The relationships between product and market have been formulated, based on national criteria.

"schooling-down": reshaping and down-sizing

5. 1993-1994 institutional merger, re-shaping education and organization. Starting unit-organization. Managementteam will be changed into an executive board; no linking-pin with units as before with divisions. Unitmanagers and service-office managers will be responsible for their units and offices. The new Innovationscheme will be implemented. A change program will be written for teaching staff (faculty). Schemes will be prepared for implementing TQM.

6. 1994-1996 new conditions will be realized, for example training for personnel; based on first evaluations of the unit-system. The change program for teachers will be implemented; TQM will be introduced. The college will be fully prepared for the new legislation of 1996.

7. 1996 finalizing of implementation and final evaluation of process and its results. New, flexible and modern eductional routes, methods and systems will be realized. Have objectives been gained? New legislation on education and vocational training (so called "WEB 96") will be operational from January 1st on.

from supertanker to flotilla [12]

One of the most important moments in this periodization is the turning-point from scaling up to schooling down. This turning point of the Frisian community college will be August 1993, so within a few weeks. At that moment the supertanker Friesland College with its four sections and three, sometimes even four, management-levels, will be renewed into the flotilla Friesland College, containing 17 unit-ships and 6 service-vessels, controlled and operated by an executive board that will set the course and fix the destination, and tries to pilot the flotilla through heavy wheather and around treacherous sandbanks. The most significant element in that flotilla will be the unit.

The unit will carry out its principal task, that is, providing education, as autonomously as possible, within a direct relationship with the branches of industry or the social market, and with the executive board. Such a unit will contain all related middle-management-courses, the 2 and 3 years fulltime courses, the parttime courses, the apprenticeship training, and realisation of contract activities. Also other elements will find their place in every unit: bridging courses, remedial teaching, basic and socio-cultural education, together with limited programs for those who cannot fully reach the lowest level of vocational training, and enriched programs for those who can do it with a little bit extra help. There will be information-technology facilities and multi-media.

An example of a unit is the unit mechanical engineering, with full-time courses in 4 years, 3 years and two years in different final levels and intake levels, with parttime courses, apprenticeship training and day-release, with welding courses, courses for unemployed, refresher courses and inservice training for employees in metal-industry and so on and so forth. Another example is the

unit social and health care, with nursing-courses, childnursing, workers in the homes for the elderly, agogic work, dieticians, in all sort of routes again. Another example. Catering used to be given in three of the four divisions: parttime in the division apprenticeship-training, fulltime for restaurant-cook etc. in the division economical studies, and for institution-cook etc. in the division of health care. The College has three or four kitchens, two restaurants, three educational teams and so on. A waste of time, of faculty, of money, and of housing. Now there will be one unit for catering, with a fine kitchen and an excellent restaurant. You're most welcome.

We will have a unit for general adult education, also with bridging courses to university and polytechnical colleges. There will be an open learning centre, among other things with interactive courses. There will be a special unit for disadvantaged students. It will be clear to you that these 17 units aren't all alike; they differ from eachother in many ways, and so the flotilla can be put together according to circumstances.

And all these units will be supported by service-offices like Students services, Education and Innovation, Personnel and Organization, Finance and A :tomation, Housing and Facilities, Managerial and Legal Affairs.

The size of the unit is such that in principle there will be no need for a further differentiation in control-management, in other words, the unitmanager is the only person within the unit who will be the first responsible person, both externally and internally. Therefore the units will contain approximately 300 to 800 FTE students or an equivalent in parttime students. This links up nicely with the general opinion in the Netherlands about the ideal size of a school for secondary general education: 600 students or pupils.

What kind of skills and abilities must one have to be a good commodore to steer the Friesland College flotilla of 17 specialized ships? First, it is necessary that the Admiralty ashore, that is the board of governors, have confidence in the commander at sea. In fact, the commodore is the admiral at sea, he is the one who sets the course, he fixes the destination, he has the long-term vision, he is the controller and mediator. And then, of course, there are the captains of the ships within the flotilla, the managers of the rather autonomous units within the unity. The units work with working-contracts with other units both inside the organization and outside: what does the unit deliver for what price and for whom. They also make contracts with the supporting services, which are the supply-ships within the flotilla. The units are responsible for their own results; the captains are responsible for their own ship and crew. But the units also have a management-

contract with the executive board, that is, the commodore of the flotilla, a contract in which is described how the unit will contribute to the college as a whole to create synergy by cooperation, and which resources and how many other facilities a unit can expect, and which conditions will be guarded by whom. We can speak here about integral management, not only of the captains of the fleet, but certainly of the commodore. Compared with the present or nearly past situation the new commodore is confronted with a wider scale of problems and challenges, or better said: he has to cope with widening polarities, with broadening horizons. And that demands for instance the following skills and abilities of the commodore.

skills and abilities of the commodore [14]

1.	have a strong and clear vision	have a flexible strategy and implementation
2.	be a risk-taking entrepeneur	be a trustworthy bookkeeper
3.	empower, support and trust workers	be an alert controller
4.	encourage independence and autonomy of units	realize synergy and chemistry between units
5.	have direct communication	be a distant ruler
6.	be a pattern and information manager	be a decisionmaker and problemsolver
7.	be an excellent planner	be an unscrupulous opportunist
8.	be a solid scolar	be an ice-floe runner
9.	be a TQM manager	be a praiser of individual quality
10.	and so on	and so forth
AND:	be conscientious	have fun

[1 again]

This flotilla-sailing in the educational sea is fully new in the Netherlands, and both employer's federations and trade unions, and the government, local and national, are highly interessed in this new strategy. Once it brought great successes to Admiral de Ruyter. He was also the one who perfected the flotilla-sailing system by adding to it a very necessary instrument, that is, a new and direct way of communication, by using signal flags. But of course: this will not be the end; this is a stage in a development. Nobody knows if unit-management will have an answer to all educational problems in future. But it is a temporary situation to take advantage, to take the wind out of the sails of the competitors. For after all, in 1676, in spite of all the victories he had gained, Admiral de Ruyter was nevertheless killed in action at Syracuse in Italy. But his statue still stands in his native town in Zealand.

Thank you.

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